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MBB Season Preview: Carter Leads Class of Transfers Ready to Make an Impact
Exhibition game and Hoops Fan Fest are set for Oct. 30 in Hanner Fieldhouse.

Marc Gignac

Men's Basketball

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STATESBORO – Georgia Southern junior forward [Simeon Carter](#) is a pretty passionate person to begin with, so you can imagine how excited he is to start the 2018-19 basketball season.

Carter, who transferred from Iowa State after getting limited playing time with the Cyclones, had to sit out last season because of NCAA transfer rules. He was able to practice with the Eagles and learn the system, but it has been a while since he has played in a game.

"It's a feeling that I can't even explain," he said. "This will be my fourth year in college, and these will really be my first college games. So it's something I'm looking forward to."

Will he ease his way into things? Maybe get adjusted to playing Division I college basketball games?

"I'll approach it like I'm on full go," said Carter. "I'm going to treat this season with a chip on my shoulder. It's just the way I grew up and the way I play."

Anybody who has watched an Eagle practice in the last year knows full-go and with a chip on his shoulder is the only way Carter knows how to play. With his high-level skill, athleticism, versatility, height and length, he is expected to be a major contributor for the Eagles this season.

"Simeon is as talented as a post player that has been here in a long time," said Georgia Southern men's basketball coach [Mark Byington](#). "It's going to take some time because he hasn't played basketball in a couple years, but he's athletic, he can shoot 3s, he can dribble, he can pass, he can block shots and he can really, really run. I think he fits our style because of his versatility, and you're going to see him do a lot of different things on the court."

Carter headlines a junior class of four transfers. [David-Lee Jones Jr.](#) transferred in as a sophomore last season, and big men [Isaiah Crawley](#) and [Trey Dawkins](#) are newcomers from junior colleges who are eligible to play this year. Though all four are expected to be in the rotation for playing time, there is an adjustment period for junior college players as Jones Jr. can attest to.

"It's the pace," said Jones Jr. "In JUCO, you're one of the most athletic guys, and now everybody is the same. What is going to separate you from others is being able to play hard and staying locked in at practice every day and getting better every day."

Jones Jr. also had some injuries early last season hamper his acclimation to Division I basketball and the Georgia Southern system. Now healthy with a solid preseason under his belt, Jones Jr. will look to increase his role this year. A true combo guard, he can play on the ball or off it.

"He looks like a veteran guard," said Byington. "He's been through it, he understands it, he knows how hard he has to play and he can score the ball and he's really athletic. There will be some times this year when he will play alongside Tookie (Brown)."

Crawley and Dawkins are already getting used to the pace of Division I basketball in practice. Crawley was the 49th-ranked JUCO player in the country by JucoRecruiting.com after averaging 17.7 points and 8.6 rebounds a game in 2017-18.

"Isaiah could be the most athletic guy on the team," said Byington. "He can play the 3 or the 4 for us. He can post up, he can drive, and he's really impressed me with his toughness, and that is something we have needed at that position. He can play intelligent basketball and can make decisions and impressed me with his toughness so mix that in with how athletic he is, and he'll be a major contributor this year."

Dawkins is a big with perimeter skills who can stretch the defense. He averaged 18.9 points, nine rebounds and two blocks a game in his senior season at East Rutherford High School - the alma mater of former Eagles Devonte and Devince Boykins - before enrolling at Southwest Tennessee, which posted a 24-5 record and advanced to the championship game of the TCCAA/NJCAA Region VII Tournament in 2018.

"Trey is different than most bigs because he does some of his best work shooting 3s and playing on the perimeter," said Byington. "He's really athletic and can run and block shots, but the best thing he does is stretch the defense because he shoots the ball at a very high level. We're trying to get him adjusted to the physicality of the game and how hard that is going to be."

A quick progression and adjustment for this group of juniors is imperative for the Eagles to have success this season.

"All we can really do is take it one play at a time," said Carter. "I expect our team to play as one and show each other love no matter what the situation is."

Georgia Southern reached 20 wins for the second time in four years in 2017-18, posting a 21-12 mark, and joined Louisiana and UTA as the only three Sun Belt schools to notch double-digit conference wins in each of the last four seasons. The Eagles return three starters and five lettermen to the 2018-19 team and open the campaign with a home exhibition contest against Charleston Southern in Hanner Fieldhouse Oct. 30.

Georgia Southern annually offers one of the best values in the Sun Belt for men's basketball season tickets and this year is no different. Season tickets in the lower reserved sections (F-J) are \$175 and sell out quickly while season tickets in the upper reserved sections (7-12) are \$140. General admission season tickets are \$100 and courtside seats are \$450 each (minimum \$1,200 Eagle Fund donation required to purchase courtside seats). Fans can purchase season tickets by visiting GSEagles.com/tix or calling 1-800-GSU-WINS.

Fans who purchase a men's season tickets will have a women's season ticket included for no additional charge.

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